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**Video Photography**

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**JW:** We'd like to start out by talking about the building of Kam Wah Chung and would you tell me, first of all, what your contacts were with Kam Wah Chung, with Doc Hay, with Lung On, with the Chinese community and how did you know about this?

**DS:** Well, it would have been ...ah...children my own age. I was in the fifth grade and enrolled in the ah...parents enrolled me in the John Day grade school, which is that building on Bridge Street just on the other side of the Interpretive Center as they've got it set up now. In fact, part of that was...ah...where we played marbles out next to the gym and...so, I became acquainted with the Chinese boy, who was my own age and in the same class, Eddy or Edward Wah, who was Doctor Bob's oldest and then there was Henry who was I think a year behind, but I knew Eddy better than...much better than Henry. It was through that acquaintance that...ah...on occasion I would be down in this area of Kam Wah Chung and on occasion would be inside the house that is...that was Bob Wah's house and his family. The boys had bedrooms downstairs. Henry and Eddy each had their own bedroom, as I recall. I think there was really no...no reason to...and I certainly was never invited to go exploring through the Chinese buildings, so my knowledge of the Kam Wah Chung building itself is...ah...um...just from a an occasional outside the building viewing of it.

One time the door was opened and I was with Eddy, I believe, or probably both of them, maybe, perhaps both of them...of the boys...and I could see Doc Hay sitting in there, but it was dark and to me it was evil and sinister and there was no way in the world that anybody could have drug me into that building where he was sitting...few feet inside...by that time I'm sure he was blind...ah...had lost all his sight. He was not practicing at that time. In fact, as I understand from...from the histories that I've read, when Leon died in 1940 Doc Hay just...it was...he had lost pretty much all his will to continue practicing...just about lost all interest in living. He, I guess, became depressed

and shortly there after, persuaded Doc Bob Wah, who was a nephew, some said living in Walla Walla, some history said, Idaho, but to come to John Day and take over the practice and I have never known whether Doc Bob was a herbalist prior to coming to John Day, or if he learned everything he knew from Doc Hay. I've never run across anything in the histories to even explore that. But...ah...anyway, my acquaintance with that was not at that area, the Chinese community, what was left of it.

**JW:** What was left at that time?

**DS:** Well, as I remember it and I'm not sure, looking at this old photograph of 1909 of China Town or what was left of it, whether these buildings here adjacent...on a parallel there to the main building were even exist. What I remember is perpendicular down here where the children's playthings are now, the swings and so on...ah...some buildings. I never went inside any of those buildings; they could have been garages, out buildings, I don't know what they were used for, if anything really, perhaps just storage. But, I don't recall that the building looked like that, what was situated right there and that this building was out of the photograph. In back of those buildings, to the north, was all tailing piled...had in, I think, the late '30's been dredged.

**JW:** Oh, Okay.

**DS:** So, from Bridge Creek, west to the creek...Canyon Creek...you know where Canyon Creek runs through there, that was all just ponds and tailing piles when we moved here...hadn't been developed into home sites...hadn't been leveled at that time. But...ah...the histories talk about the Chinese giving candy to the kids, sometimes fireworks, things like that. By the time we moved here that was past history.

**JW:** Was it?

**DS:** Yeah, and they also speak of when they went in there, Gordon Glass, went into the building...um...he was the councilman on the committee to Parks and Rec...when they opened it up, they said, something about school boys had gone in and rustled through the building looking for fireworks and to me that's just hard to imagine. I don't know how they could have gained access to the building it was locked up. Certainly the Chinese didn't invite...ah...Chinese...excuse me, white people...it was kind of an uneasy feeling that I had, certainly not white to white, but there were times when we were allowed into Doc Bob's house. I was never really encouraged to go into any of the Chinese structures...buildings...and not Kam Wah Chung. Perhaps earlier on, in the "20's, the teens, perhaps it was much more open, especially when they were...Doc Hay was doing his practice. I can say first hand that mom, probably about 1945, I don't know what her ailment was or sickness, but she had gone to Doc Bob and she came home with this bag full of stuff and boiled it on the stove, we had a cook stove...wood cook stove, and I can remember that she had to boil the stuff and it was just...ah...mix of stuff. It didn't smell very good. From what I remember of her talking about it, it tastes worse. [Both laugh] She was supposed to drink this stuff and I don't know what the outcome was, whether it

helped her or not, and like I say, I don't know what her problem was, but she had gone to Doctor Bob and dad was an English man.

He came to Canada in 1920. He was born in 1899. In England, at the time he was mustered out of the English Army, just before going to France, England was in bad shape and you either went on the dole, which was their welfare, or they paid passage to Canada or wherever and set you up with employment and that's what he did. He came to Canada, worked his way across Canada, came down into the United States, probably illegally...was broke...got to Seattle...saw a Army poster that was about the best offer he had at that time and joined the Army and they sent him to China. He did a tour in China with the Army and that was the tag end with the boxer rebellion when you had contingents with these different foreign countries, so the tour was up and he mustered out in China and took a job with Dodge Motor Company. He joined the Mason's...it was...I remember one city that he was in, it was Tin Sin and he went to work for Dodge Motor Car Company selling parts in China and picked up enough Chinese, so when he came to John Day he would frequently go down and talk with them in Chinese. I don't know how much of a vocabulary he had and certainly there's the different dialects in China itself, but apparently he and Doctor Bob...ah...could talk...in...in...enough of the words anyway. He was probably one of the more accepted men around town, but Bob was...Doctor Bob, as I remember him, was friendly and open with the whites and had a good practice. In fact, I think he's buried in the Cemetery Rest Lawn over in John Day.

Another thing that I do remember, as a kid, was right above the McDonalds...you got a flat piece of ground the store is sitting on, and then you got a little bit of a slope, and then you got a little bench right above there, now in that vicinity was the Chinese graveyard and it was a small enclosure, as I remember it, but I remember their papers and their things they would put on the gravesites, and I bet you couldn't even find it today. I don't think there is anything there, and I've never been back to that site, even to look around in the 60 some years since I remember seeing it as a kid, because as a kid, all us kids at that age, especially junior high and high school, our play ground was all of these...everything around here, within five or ten miles of John Day, was our playground. We poked our nose into absolutely every mine, old homesteads, abandoned shacks, and everything else that we came across...great fun.

**JW:** What kind of papers—

**DS:** The papers, as I understand, were to ward off the devil. They were punched full of holes and so the devil, at least from the histories that I've read, would have to go in and out of these tiny little holes...about the size of what you would punch through with a led pencil. I don't know how long the papers were, but the devil...part of their religion...would have to find his way through all of these papers...was to protect the bodies. So, there was that little cemetery, and mom's experience, and dad's experience, and the fact of the episode in which...ah...I was looking in the building and didn't want any part of it. [Both laugh]

**JW:** Could you describe the outside of the building, as you remember it?

**DS:** Looked pretty much like this photograph...to me. I think it was pretty much run down. [Showing the photograph] Now, this is 1909. As I understand it, the last fire that took most of the buildings was in 1927. There was a fire prior to that that took half a dozen of their dwellings. By that time, the Chinese population at the turn of the century was really in severe decline, but the open ground was the same. Doctor Bob's house was over here...bed and breakfast is now.

**JW:** How about...was there a garden...fishpond...do you remember anything?

**DS:** No, there was a creek right over here. At that time, steelhead fishing was permitted on Canyon Creek and the game commission later came along and stopped that, but in February, March, April, they were lined up down there fishing for steelhead. This was just in back of this building, but there wasn't the improvements, there wasn't the park. There might have been, farther on up Canton Street, a couple of the houses. The Methodist Church wasn't there, but...ah...one or two of those small houses was there and then the Insurance building up at the end of the street, on the highway, was a dairy. They processed milk products. That building has undergone a lot of changes.

**JW:** So, you've gone inside this building?

**DS:** No, not until after Gordon opened it up and I went thru on a tour with Carolyn one time. I became president of the Historical Society, now no longer in existence; they merged with the museum downtown, but Gordon was the president of the Historical Society. When they moved and went to Sun City, Arizona...I took over...and...ah...I've been involved in the local history quite a number of years now. It's a hobby. I've got a whole room full of records down stairs. Scads of notebooks, just like this one. Got to where I had to go from one, to two, to ten, to twenty. [Both Laugh] Categorize each and every one of them. It gets frustrating when you know you have something and can't find it. [Both Laugh]

**JW:** I understand.

**DS:** Most of my experience, really first hand experience, is really with the kids my age, Eddy and Henry.

**JW:** Since you took over Gordon's role, could you tell us a little bit about Gordon Glass, what he did, what his responsibilities were, how he was involved in this whole project?

**DS:** Well, Gordon had served in the military. I think he was in the air force, World War II. When he first arrived here he was a meat cutter at one of the local supermarkets...Wayside Market...I think. Shortly there after, married Laura Glass, who was the daughter of Buck Smith, who had the local Chevrolet dealership and eventually, Buck retired and went to Sun City...he and his wife...Gordon took over as the head of the firm. So, for many years he did that...sold cars and parts there in the Chevy garage. The building is still there. It's not a dealership anymore. It's an auto repair shop. As he

says in something I read, Gordon said, I became interested in local history as...ah...this business with Kam Wah Chung was the catalyst...and...so...but...this...I think...the Kam Wah Chung was his first love. He got very much involved in it, and I remember, my brother and I, talking to Gordon back in the late 70's, when he was just so enthusiastic about the project and all he'd found...the bourbon that had been stashed. One account said, ninety...ninety-some bottles, but most of the accounts said, seventy-three bottles...hidden pre-prohibition bourbon...a lot of it unopened. I guess the building did do some bootlegging and they got busted a few times by the locals for that sort of thing. There was some man that came out here...was photographed in the building from the Bourbon Institute and he may have been sold for a hundred dollars...hundred and fifty...several bottles. As I understand it, the rest of the inventory, I think, is in the Courthouse? I've heard that, I don't know for sure, but...ah...understand that that's the case...basement of the Courthouse...vault perhaps...or someplace in the Courthouse has got this whiskey.

**JW:** Did Gordon mention to you what the building looked like when they went in? You said, there were rumors that the children went—

**DS:** I just...again, I can't... I can't imagine, but perhaps that was the case. Maybe, before they got title to it, maybe before they locked it up, otherwise, it was locked up for years and nobody disturbed it. It was pretty much a disorganized mess, when Gordon first opened it up. I think he had an Archaeologist with him when he did that...first investigated the building...went in there.

**JW:** A disorganized mess, meaning things were moved around—

**DS:** Well, to hear his report in one of these accounts it was ankle to knee deep [Both laugh] and everything imaginable, from records to...ah...there were even checks that had been paid to Doc Hay for services that had gone un-cashed, which according to the reports again, he said, well, they needed it more than I did, referring to the people he treated, so he didn't cash the checks. One thing I have not run across so far, more so community hearsay, is when Leon Died in 1940, he had half of his estate go to Doc Hay as the partner...life long partner. The other half was to go to the daughter in China and there was a lawyer here in John Day, who became under intense pressure to settle this and it drug on for years, not months, but years, as I understand it. Part of the problem being that China was then communist...you know...and...ah...I don't even know that we had any kind of diplomatic...ah...litigation in China or not, I doubt it, but anyway, they never found her, as I understand it, the daughter. How much of this have you read about the families, of Doc Hay and Leon?

**JW:** Just a little about the, as you were saying, that they tried to get it to happen and she wrote, apparently, also and tried to get it to happen, but it never happened.

**DS:** Who's she?

**JW:** His daughter.

**DS:** Well...ah...as I understand in both cases, both Leon and Doc Hay, didn't have anything to do with the families in China. They were always begging and asking for relief...help...they didn't get any response...never sent them any help...that's pretty well documented. So, that's about all I can tell you, I think, about the...ah...like I say, I was only eleven to thirteen years old at the time that...ah...as far as Eddy was concerned he wasn't a real close friend. I would say more of a friend-acquaintance than a real, real close buddy...ah...we did a few things together. I can remember one time we were down below town after bullfrogs, and we were lucky, and found this place where the frogs...at that time there wasn't the state law about catching frogs with a fishing pole and a piece of red felt...how you could ever get close enough to a bull frog and do that is beyond me, but we found a little pond that was knee deep in water and about the size of this deck. Eddy and I were alone and there was about twenty of these bullfrogs and we kept after those frogs until we caught them. The water was muddy, but they'd have to come up every once in a while and we'd go after them. Frog legs was a delicacy for both the Chinese and the Whites. They were tasty.

**JW:** Did you ever hear stories about the store, about what people bought in the store, about Lung On and his business practices and the things he was involved in? Have you heard...in the community—

**DS:** No, just what I've read. What you've read. All of this, it's all there. [Referring to the binder he has] He was the entrepreneur, the CEO of the company. They apparently had good balance. They apparently had got along very well, except on occasion, Leon would go on a losing streak and their cash flow would go down, apparently they got along very well and neither...well...apparently they both had wives and children in China. I don't think Doc Hay ever became interested in white women. Leon reportedly, according to the records, did date a few white women. As time went on, the animosity towards Chinese that was prevalent in the 1880's, during the exclusion acts, diminished, especially as the whites, apparently did not feel threatened any longer and the population greatly diminished, so the Chinese were much more accepted in the community. The only instance that I ever knew about was when Henry dated and got serious with a white girl.

This was right during World War II, you know, with the Japanese thing going on. This man was the father of this girl and was very much opposed to it and made some racial slurs towards Henry and probably broke it up. I was not that close to it, so this was all just community gossip. About that time...possibly...this you would want to confirm...shot himself... and...ah...botched the job, because he shot himself in the stomach or lower body, not up here where it was serious and recovered. This father...um...he was very much anti Chinese, he just didn't want any part of them and there were some racial slurs towards these people.

The only other thing...I don't know how much local gossip you want to get into...if your interested...ah...you might want to confirm it with other people. It is my understanding that when Eddy returned after Dental school...Eddy was one of the best students that

Grant Union ever had...should have been **Valid Victorian**, rather than myself...I was Valid Victorian...he was **Saluda Victorian**...should have been the other way around...I'm not sure, but some of that had to have been racial. To this day I still feel that way. I know he was a much better student than I was. In fact, you could get good grades at Grant just by not giving the teachers a bad time. [Both laugh] But, anyway he went on to Dental school and I think the family funded the whole thing for him, unlike a lot of us white kids didn't have that financial backing. They weren't wealthy, by any means, I don't think, but they did well, I think. I know Bob Wah set up one of the classmates of mine in the service station business here in town, funded the whole thing for him. He did things like that, outside the Chinese community...but...ah...Eddy came back here and I think was set up in practice. I think Bob funded the building, the dental building, which is now Mike Desjardin's dental practice there next to the Bed and Breakfast...that building there. I don't know for sure and this is just community gossip, that he may have been subjected to some discrimination, especially as far as the Elks...joining the Elks...something like that. There wasn't any kind of...ah...community here and that could have been part of the reason for going back to...going to Portland...he had gone to school in Portland...um...um...he married a Portland girl. His children, as I understand it, have done very well, one is a Lawyer, I believe. I think he had maybe three children. Henry also went to Portland. Eddy would come back on occasion. Last time, I think, was for a class reunion in 1995, about the last time I saw him. I don't know that Henry ever did, I think he was bitter...um...maybe, that's too strong a word. I think Eddy accepted the Estate of Doc Hay and Bob Wah, as far as, turning the property over to the City of John Day for the building and the Museum...ah...all the contents. There was something there, as far as, ownership that was up in the air for a while and I think Henry was involved in that. I don't know that Eddy ever got himself involved in it, but I think Henry was a little bitter over the settlement of the Estate and I don't know that he's ever come back to John Day...Eddy did. One time I ran into Eddy. He had a distinctive walking pace. I recognized him walking the concrete boardwalk in Seaside, this was years and years ago, I think in the 70's, but I recognized the gait...walk...he was maybe a hundred yards down the walk from where we was...was there on the beach and I hollered at him and he turned around. Later on we got together for a game of bowling in the Seaside. They had a purchased a Seaside place there...or excuse me...a home there at Seaside and would spend, maybe, three days a week down there, besides their home in Portland, which was out by Glendever Golf Course...somewhere out there. I think he's been...Eddy's been very successful in his practice there in Portland. I don't know if you have ever seen a photograph of Eddy or not. I've got a couple of them. One of them was in the Sunset magazine...an add. [Showing the magazine add] This is in 1991...about fifteen years ago. It's the March issue of 1991 and it says...Eddy was about fifty-nine years at this time it says, "Take two lizards feet and call me in the morning." [Both laugh] Let's see what else I've got here. I don't know if you've seen this picture, this is Leon, and it was spelled different ways. The whites would pronounce it Leon, like the English spelling L-E-O-N, or somebody would maybe spell it L-E-E space O-N.

**JW:** Oh, Okay, Lee on

**DS:** Yeah, but...ah...and there was another Chinese. This is from...ah...there's another picture of Eddy...ah...when he was younger...this is the Eugene Register Guard, November 16, 1975 and this is a photograph of Eddy in that clipping...and...ah... here's a picture of the building. We were always intrigued with the small rifle...the ports...in through the heavy stone, apparently, put in for defense, I guess. They should still be in the building if you ever get down there and take a close look at the front of the building. There should be a rifle port, about this big. Do you remember seeing anything like that?

**JW:** No, I don't, but I'm sure going to look.

**DS:** The Interpretive Center down there should have all of this material. But, that's Eddy. I don't have anything of Henry, unless you go back and look at school annuals and that sort of thing. Eddy was good looking. I would...I wouldn't have been surprised...it didn't happen in high school of...ah...when I was in high school from '46' to '50' ...but, if he was going to high school today, I wouldn't have been surprised if white girls would date Chinese. I think the whole picture has changed...um...interracial.

**JW:** Yeah, things are different today. I think you're right. So, when Gordon Glass left, you took over—

**DS:** Historical Society, nothing to do with the Chinese though.

**JW:** With Kam Wah Chung?

**DS:** Except that you can't do local history without building a notebook on the Indians...even the Blacks, there was a black family here...that...I think, this much [Fanning the notebook pages] is on the Blacks...this is Blacks and Chinese...this notebook. The person that has done the most work, in this regard, is William Willingham. I don't know if you have run across his name or not, but he did a series of articles called, "Cultures in Conflict"...um...William F. Willingham.

**JW:** Okay.

**DS:** He recently wrote a book "The History of Long Creek" and today, Saturday, at four o'clock, he'll be speaking in Long Creek and be talking about this history...public invited...if you would like to meet this man. He's done quite a bit of history on the Chinese, and he's written extensively, with the help of Janice Justice, who is curator down here at the Historical Museum, at the time. This is dated July 2, 1981. [Showing article] That's twenty-five years ago. Willingham, I think, is a P.H.D...taught at Lewis and Clark...he could have taught back east in...ah...I've never met the man, but we have exchanged e-mails. Barbara and I are going to go over there and listen in...they're serving Lasagna.

**JW:** Now, when is this?



**DS:** Four o'clock this afternoon, Long Creek Community Center. So, I've got at least...I don't know if I've got all of them...but...um...The Eagle in years past has published a lot of historical stuff. They don't do that much anymore, at least not in the last couple of years. They don't seem to be too interested in that, but...um...these are some photographs and later on I can show you the Humboldt mine right over here, what is left of it. When I was a kid, they sluiced with a giant...that's what this big nozzle is here and the Chinese were employed as laborers. They would put these boulders in slings and you can see the boulders laying there in this photograph. This is a crew of Chinese and generally the crews that worked, as I understand it, were muscular...the best physics among the Chinese laborers were employed for this work and...ah...they worked for the company, the Humboldt Company, that operated on this...this...ah...huge cut in the hillside that operated from about 1880 to the turn of the century...bout twenty years and where we're sitting is not the start of the mine, but is the start of the mining and I'll show you where the mine...right over here...in our back yard was located. [Laughing] They were all up and down this slope and on the other side of this draw right here, the old Izee Gulch, is where the mine actually started. They took the water off of the old Humboldt ditch farther on up the hillside. In fact, you can still see on the side of the hill, right over there, the line. Barbara and I have walked it for a mile or mile and a half one time. The problem with trying to walk it is a lot of it was...was...um...on shale slopes or loose material and they would have to build these flumes across these...and of course, these flumes are gone now, I don't even know if you could find an old board left from those days, but they took the water out of Canyon Creek way up there and brought it down here, in fact historically there were three ditches, that one being the highest. I've got a metal detector and eventually, I'm going to go up there [Pointing up the hill] see how many square...I have found a lot of square nails, but I'm sure they came with laterals off of that main ditch. What they would do is they would dig in this old streambed...gravel deposits...bring the gravel out and wash it. This mine right here didn't go back all that far. I can show you part of the rubble that they washed. We hauled off, I think it was, twelve dump truck loads of it a few years ago when we bought this side lot right here, and we've got some boulders there that are the size of this table and probably weigh a few tons, right over here. We can't find anybody with equipment big enough, or strong enough, or sturdy enough to haul them off. We'd really like to get rid of them. There's one right here...this boulder. Can you imagine those Chinese move...I don't how they moved those boulders around, but, anyway I can take you across the...over to the cemetery and you can view this cut in the hillside over there and really get a better understanding of how much material was moved over the years from this sluicing operation.

**JW:** [Unclear, handing him a newspaper clipping]

**DS:** Anyway, what you see here, in this photograph, is how they got rid of the wastewater. They dug these trenches and it was kind of like a chickens foot and they would branch, and they would come together, and then they drilled through the lip of the hill, and the water would waste out the other side, and down into Canyon Creek. When I was a kid we used to go in those things. All the way through or there was one that dead end way inside. It's a wonder some kid didn't get buried in there. I told my kids to stay

out and they told their kids to stay out. Finally, all that ground was bulldozed over and they made a subdivision out of it, so, fortunately all of that is no longer a problem for some kid getting buried inside...um...because, my kids didn't obey me neither did the grandkids...we'd find this out later on. [Both laugh] To look at it and you'd stand up on the rim, one time we took Phil, the radio station man, on a two mile hike along...and he'd look over the edge and he wouldn't get too close, but to look at the rock, the sandstone, and it was all fractured and it looked very unstable and dangerous, but as kids, I didn't care.

**JW:** Right, invincible.

**DS:** Now, you can't even get me inside one of these old mines up on the mountain here...won't do it. [Laughing]

**JW:** I don't blame you.

**DS:** Well, I can go see if I can find that video and give you a date on it.

**JW:** Okay

**DS:** And the production company and the name of it. I think it's the same...same thing. I'll also show you the mine right down here. I...when we moved here there was a hole there and kids were curious, and there was water in it, and it was sloped, and every once in a while a dog would go in and get himself a drink and come out all wet...took us a while to figure out the dogs were going inside this old mine, so I thought, I'm just going to rock it over to keep the kids out and there won't be anymore curiosity about that old mine...about going in it...and I'm not going to get sued. [Both laugh] So, I rocked it over. Just like all this...these rock walls. [Pointing to his yard] There was plenty of building material for that. Mostly, it came out of that side yard. It was all hauled downtown into a fill downtown. Finally the guy say's, I just can't get my little backhoe to pick up any more rock. There still rock over there next to the neighbor that I would like to remove. A lot of history around this, besides the Chinese.

**JW:** When Gordon left and you took over, were there any items...did he have any souvenirs from the store?

**DS:** No artifacts. They did turn over to me records and which I turned over to the Historical Society or excuse me, the museum down below...um...the Historical Museum, but they don't have any space, so they said, you keep it up here. It is in the storeroom, but...ah...[Both laugh] Barbara, "what'll I do with all this stuff if you pass away?" Give it to the Museum!

**JW:** Were those records from Kam Wah Chung?

**DS:** No, no, they were just—

**JW:** They were just general records.

**DS:** They weren't cataloged. They weren't in any kind of order. It was just a box and I've gone through and tried to organize and catalog everything. It's a hodgepodge of history.

**JW:** Is there any more stories you'd like to share?

**DS:** The only other information I can cross check with you is people that you should contact like, Janis Justice, if you haven't already. She mentioned she was curator of the Historical Museum...she worked with Willingham...Willingham certainly...Eddy Wah...Henry Wah, if he'll talk to you...um...boy, so many people have died that have experience with Doc Hay.

**JW:** That's what we have heard. Well, if you think of more.

**DS:** Who have you talked to, so far?

**JW:** So far, we have only talked to Roy Allen and we have about eight more interviews scheduled next week. We are just starting. We do have a bunch of names here. Okay, thank you very much. This has been great.

**GW:** End of interview.